

-TESTIMONY TEMPLATE -  
**Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments**  
**Appropriations Hearing**  
**HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**  
**Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Jessie Middleton**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Jessie Middleton and I am a registered voter in East Hartford.

I am here to testify in regards to the proposed budget for DMHAS.

I am a 50 year old male diagnosed with Schizoaffective Disorder and Bipolar. I currently live in a two-bedroom apartment with my sister and our three nephews. I have my own room but my sister and two of my nephews sleep on the floor in the living room. We desperately need better affordable housing so we can live a more comfortable life. I also go to a Non-Profit Social Club/Learning Center called Common Ground through Intercommunity Inc. This club allows me to make friends, go on trips, volunteer at the store and generally feel better about myself. All of these services rely on funding from the state, so this funding is crucial for me to continue being a productive member of society. I don't know what I would do without Common Ground and I pray that some day my family will be able to find better housing.

In that light I would like to commend Governor Lamont for including money in the budget for supportive housing services

However, there are things that Governor Lamont's proposed budget does not address that are of concern to me. One of my concerns is for the underfunding of community non-profits like Common Ground. These non-profits are struggling to provide services because of low salaries for Case Workers and budget cuts for programs. There are waiting lists for almost every service for people with mental health diagnosis and in most cases, time is of the essence. So this lack of funding can many times be life changing. So please increase funding for these essential programs in our state.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my (lived) experience with you about what this would mean to me and my family.

Sincerely,

Jessie Middleton